

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SAFETY COMMITTEE HELD IN ROOM  
27, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
WEDNESDAY 25 JUNE 2009 AT 2PM

PRESENT: Simon Drinkwater (Chairman).  
Roy Crow, Peter Dickinson, Chris Gibson,  
Jenny Francis, Sue Gray, Graham Mully,  
Andrew Pulham, Susan Scully, Paul Thomas.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Mannings.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of  
Dave Cooper, Helen Farrell, Mark Kingsland, Jean Petrie,  
Peter Searle, Martin Shrosbree and Steve Whinnett.

2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2009 were  
agreed as a correct record.

3 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY REVIEW/UPDATES

Graham Mully circulated a copy of the Health and Safety  
Audit review document. He submitted a breakdown of the  
actions detailed in the action plan. He made particular  
reference to a shortage of Safety Liaison Officers (SLOs).

Graham Mully advised that the Operational Risk  
Management Group had met on 23 June 2009. He  
commented that a number of risk assessments were  
currently being trialled. The Safety Committee was  
advised that generic risk assessment templates had proved  
to be fit for purpose for new risk assessments.

Graham Mully commented that risk assessments in respect  
of COSHH and PPE were on track following significant  
amounts of work carried out by Peter Dickinson. Peter

Dickinson stated that Human Resources were harmonising HR policies. He commented that risk assessments would be rolled out in the middle of September.

Peter Dickinson reported that fire drills were scheduled at all three council offices. He also stated that a programme of training was being organised for Fire Marshalls. He undertook to e-mail details of the programme as possible.

PD

#### 4 NEW REGULATIONS, IF ANY

The Safety Committee was advised that first aid at work regulations had been updated and there was a new emergency course. First aiders would also have to receive 3 hours of refresher training each year.

#### 5 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTS

Peter Dickinson commented that there had been 2 minor accidents involving Officers. He stated that there had an incident when an Officer in Internal Services had fallen off a chair. An Officer in Neighbourhood Services had also suffered a cut hand from a door lock at Wallfields. A contractor had suffered a cut to the head whilst inspecting cavity repair work. Peter Dickinson commented that there had been no reportable accidents.

#### 6 DRIVING AT WORK

Graham Mully commented that service heads had indicated that a policy for driving at work should be devised. He stated that a risk assessment had been produced and updated. The Safety Committee was advised that a driving at work policy should be drafted as soon as possible.

The Safety Committee was advised that a green travel policy was being investigated as part of the C3W project and a driving at work policy could be incorporated into this. Peter Dickinson commented that the policy should include a section on driving conditions and should be a broad

overview rather than being specific to individuals.

Peter Dickinson also commented that the authority should tighten up on managers requesting to see Officer's vehicle documents. In response to a request from Andrew Pulham, Peter Dickinson undertook to e-mail him guidance on working with contractors.

PD

## 7 LONE WORKING

The Safety Committee was advised that lone working should be looked at more consistently across the Authority. The Audit Commission was concerned that current policies were not relevant to the risks encountered by Officers. Concerns had also been raised that Officers most at risk may have the least protection.

## 8 ITEMS FROM THE TRADE UNION

The Safety Committee was advised that 1 in 10 of Officers who had conducted a self risk assessment for home working would be subjected to a closer examination to ensure the assessment had been done correctly.

Simon Drinkwater commented that there were a significant number of issues to be addressed in respect of home working. He stated that home working represented a significant cultural change for the authority.

Simon Drinkwater commented that Officers must have the appropriate support to ensure that home working was successful. Peter Dickinson referred to the risks associated with social isolation for Officers who work from home. He stated that managing home working was a significant issue for the authority.

Jenny Francis and Sue Gray commented that all home working risk assessments should be conducted on a one to one basis. Simon Drinkwater undertook to raise the issue of home working at the next C3W programme board meeting.

SD

In response to a query from Jenny Francis and Sue Gray on floor space allocations at Wallfields, Graham Mully confirmed that the legal requirement was 11 m<sup>3</sup> per person. He commented that C3W should be a standing item on the Safety Committee Agenda.

PM

Graham Mully also commented that issues around Health and Safety in relation to noise, heat and the general office environment should appear on as many agendas for internal meetings as possible.

## 9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### (A) Workstation Risk Assessments

Graham Mully undertook to provide feedback at the next meeting once a meeting had taken place between Safety Liaison Officers (SLOs) and Display Screen Equipment (DSE) workstation assessors.

GM

### (B) Swine Flu

Andrew Pulham commented that he had been asked to prepare a business continuity plan for his service and for contractors. He queried whether there was a standard template for this. Simon Drinkwater confirmed that there was a generic template.

Simon Drinkwater advised that Managers should plan on the basis that one third of Officers would be off work, with 10% being ill and a further 20% being off work to look after family members with the illness.

Simon Drinkwater stated that the authority may have to set up and run a centre for the distribution of anti viral drugs. He advised that a corporate action plan was being produced and managers should consider how their service would operate if a third of Officers were off work.

In response to a comment from Peter Dickinson in respect of Officers concerns about levels of absenteeism, Simon Drinkwater stated that Officers who fell ill at work would be sent home and Officers who became ill at home would be told to stay there.

(C) Alcohol Hand Wash Dispensers

In response to a query from Paul Thomas, Peter Dickinson and Simon Drinkwater confirmed that a COSHH assessment had been completed.

(D) Wallfields Car Park

Paul Thomas raised concerns about contractors parking on the path adjacent to the access barrier. Following a discussion about options to mitigate this, Roy Crow undertook to look into this issue.

RC

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 17 September 2009, in the meeting room at Buntingford Depot at 2.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 3.10 pm